

# The Axehead

by Lester Roloff

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing sin and personal responsibility, and seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance in order to live a life of conviction and faith.*

**Duration:** 37:07

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 6:1

**Topics:** "Repentance And Forgiveness", "Consequences Of Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker, Dr. Jones, addresses the audience about the consequences of sin and the need for repentance. He references the story of King David and his affair with Bathsheba, highlighting the moment when David's sin was exposed. The speaker also shares a personal story about a little girl who died after leaving her home, emphasizing the tragic consequences of sin. Dr. Jones then discusses the importance of recognizing our sins and turning to God for forgiveness and redemption. He concludes by expressing his willingness to face legal consequences for his actions in order to fight for what he believes is right.

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## Transcript

For years, speakers have drawn Christians towards deeper service for the Lord from the chapel platform. This program, the chapel platform, comes to you from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. As the call for deeper prayer and discipleship has gone forth, God has used many speakers on the chapel platform to share the truth from the Bible at the various preaching services here.

Dr. James Conley led the hymn. Dr. Bob Jones III introduced our speaker, the late Dr. Lester Roloff, who is remembered for the children's homes he founded by God's leading in the Corpus Christi, Texas area. Brother Roloff gave this heartfelt message on Tuesday morning, May 7th, 1974 at a university chapel service.

His text is 2 Kings 6 verses 1-7. Listen now as Dr. Roloff challenged his hearers to needed growth in the Lord. The title of his message is, The Axe Head.

You can expect this. They that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. You don't need to feel sorry for those going through it.

You need to pray for them. But it's part of being godly. And any church, any work like Brother Roloff's, any work like this institution can expect that.

The devil doesn't like what you're doing. If you're not getting that, then you're not doing anything to thwart the devil's purposes and to oppose him and to uphold the righteousness of Christ. We thank the Lord for a man like Brother Roloff who is a warrior who loves the Lord enough and loves young people enough to take it on the chin rather than to grow weak in the knees and buckle under the pressure.

I think I told you that when I was down there for that great rally he had in August when the trouble first was beginning to break into the open. He called a great rally and people came from all over the country, many preachers and laymen. And he explained what was going on and tried to rally God's people to the need of the hour.

He stood there with a brown book in one hand and the Bible in the other hand and he said, here's the welfare manual, this brown book. And my predicament is that I'm going to have to obey one of these authorities or the other. And he said, I cannot follow the brown book and be true to the black book.

And he threw the brown book down and stamped all over it. Well, that was good. Now, you've got one of two choices, young people, to let the Word of God be your authority, to preach it, to live it, to be consistent with it, or to compromise it and get what benefits the world has to give those who bow down before their idols.

Brother Olive refuses to bow. He set a good example for you and for pastors and Christians all over this country. If we had more of that kind of manhood, the devil would be on the run rather than the church being on the run.

Because he's this kind of man, we're just deeply honored to have him here. He's a great personal blessing to my heart. I admire him and love him and I know you've come to admire him and love him, too.

If you're right with the Lord, you can't help feeling that way about him. Brother Roloff, thank you for coming. Thank you for bringing the group with you.

Come and preach now. Thank you, Dr. Jones, and I'm glad we've got somebody at the head of a great university that is willing to join us in the fight. We'll call this a liberty rally.

I stood in a little one-room schoolhouse fifty years ago, one half-century ago. I had one teacher that taught eighth grade. She rode an old horse five miles through the country to be my teacher.

And she'd tell me about George Washington. And I'm thankful to Mrs. Stenholm and the film department for giving us a viewing of Red Runs the River this morning. War seems so foolish, doesn't it? And so fatal.

And yet, man never seems to learn that God's way is the best way. It's the liberty way. But I'd stand and we'd sing, My country, tis of thee, sweet land of liberty.

I never dreamed that in forty-one years of preaching, it would be consummated with a trip to jail for doing good. Jesus raised the question one day to the religious, I said, the religious and the political leaders, is it lawful to do good or to do evil, to save life or destroy life? My native state that gave me my birth has made the decision and the courthouse ruling that it's unlawful to do good, to save life. And so three hundred little girls, to the tune of tears and some screaming and crying, walked out of the most beautiful dormitories in

America today and headed back for the booby traps of sin and defeat and even death.

I've stood to salute the flag many times, but somehow or another I have to soft-pedal now with liberty and justice for all, though I'm still for the flag. I'm still for America and for what she stands for. I want the girls to sing.

Brother John, I'd like for you and the girls to stand for me, please. This is another home represented here today, Brother Johnny Davis, the convert of our tent evangelism of many years ago, twenty years ago or more. And three young ladies that were bound by the dope habit that sang last night, lovely Christians they are, facing penitentiary sentences.

And Jesus gave them a life sentence, and they've been happy ever since. There's only one hope for a drunkard or a dope addict. I spoke to the juvenile delinquency department or teacher and pupils and so forth, students, today, and I made the statement, everybody's born delinquent.

That first birth ruins us, and without the second birth, it'd have been better not to have had the first one. Amen? And so I'd like for the girls to sing one of the sweetest songs we have. And then I want to bring a message on the subject, have you lost something? Have you ever heard anybody say, have you lost something? Are you looking for something? What do you suppose you're looking for? Have you found it in Bob Jones University? Where can I find what I'm looking for? The girls are saying, I believe.

Bethlehem, he was born. I believe, I believe. Galilee, he was born.

I believe, I believe. He died a tomb, he left there. I believe, I believe.

I believe, I believe. Our Heavenly Father, we pray now that the message will come clear and plain, encouraged in the right spirit. We pray to bless this institution, this way of living, way of training, Christian culture meets Christ on this campus.

And we thank Thee, our Father, for the young people that had sense enough and guidance enough to make a decision to come to a school like this school. We thank Thee for its illustrious past, for its great heritage, for the old warriors and soldiers that have fought through harder times than maybe they face now, when buildings were scarce and money was hard to get and yet somebody paid the price. And remind these dear leaders today that they stand on the shoulders of great men and women who've gone on before them and have given their lives to build a Bob Jones University.

I pray that Christ shall be the center. The Bible, the textbook, and the power of God and the Holy Spirit, the inspiration. And grant that soul winning will be the desire and the goal and the chief aim of every student that walks across the platform to receive a degree.

We pray that we may keep in mind that the BA degree, born again, is still the top degree to be offered in any institution. Bless our nation. God have mercy upon our nation.

And bless a generation of students with a will to fight and stand for that which is right. And help us to know the Bible's our textbook. God, all the rules and regulations we'll ever need to guide our lives safely through this wilderness of confusion.

We thank Thee, our Father, for the sweet privilege of being here today. Such a sense of unworthiness floods my soul. The confidence that the people have placed in us, the love and the respect and the

support has been more than my heart had a right to expect.

But I thank Thee for it, in Jesus' name. Amen. Students and faculty, I call your attention today to the passage found over in II Kings.

There was a busy young man, and he was off at school getting his training. And like Bob Jones, they had healthy growing pains. Always building, just building.

The price of growth is building buildings. And these young students came one day and said, We want to build a building. And the preacher, who evidently was the leader, said, Well, go ahead and help yourself.

And in this sixth chapter of the book of II Kings, Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make a place there where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. One said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants.

And he answered, I will go. I had thought as I read that, that I had not seen before, these young sons of the prophets recognize their need of direction, supervision, and leadership. It's one of the first lessons you'll need to learn in college or anywhere else.

And that is, the professor may know more than you know. And if he does, you better let him do the teaching, and you do the listening. One of the advantages that I had when I went to Baylor University with my little milk cow that paid my way through college, that is, my boarding room, I didn't have enough sense to ask a sensible question.

Therefore, I kept quiet. But I was better off than the smart illness that asks so many foolish questions. It's all right to be smart, but when you turn out to be a smart illic, you're no good.

So they said, We want you to go with us. We're going to have to have some help. And you'll tell us how to do it.

And so every man took a bean, picked him up a piece of lumber, and said, I'm going to have my part in the building. And so there was one fellow, while he was busy, felling a bean, axe head fell into the water. Now, that's the business end of the axe, isn't it? The axe head.

And they didn't have chainsaws back there then. They had axes. And his axe head fell into the water and, of course, sank.

He lost something, didn't he? Now, when you lose your axe head, you're out of business, except maybe for just knocking a little bark off the tree. You can make as much fuss and as much racket with an axe handle, but you can't cut down a tree with an axe handle. We've got too many axe handle people.

Let's see how he got it back. He cried, that's number one. The Bible said, they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He'd go forth and weep it, bearing precious seed, doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. And he cried about it. He recognized the plight he was in.

And then he did something else. Alas, master, for it was borrowed. It wasn't mine to start with.

You don't own the Holy Spirit, students. Neither does the faculty. You don't operate the Holy Spirit.

He operates you. The power of God is a sacred trust that he gives to the humble and the obedient. You know the greatest command in the Bible, Ephesians 5.18, Be ye filled with the Spirit.

That's a command, to be filled. Being filled with the Spirit's not optional. God's got a right to fill everything he possesses.

And when he possesses you, he wants to fill you. You'd say, I'm afraid of what I'd act like if I got full of the Holy Spirit. Well, I can say to your fears in a second you'd act like Jesus.

That's what makes people act like Jesus, is to have His Spirit. They'll love like Jesus. They'll give like Jesus.

They'll witness like Jesus. And they'll act like Jesus when you have the Spirit of Christ. The Bible said if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he's none of His.

God didn't save you to keep you out of trouble. In fact, yes, I've been in more trouble over this book right here. That book right there, the King James Version, has gotten me in more trouble than any book I ever read.

But, it's gotten me out of more trouble, and the most serious trouble. I was lost, but being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God. So I got saved through the Word of God.

All the wisdom I have this morning was given to me through the Word of God. Sure, I went off to Baylor University. Sure, I went to Southwestern Seminary.

Sure, I've had 19 years of education and so forth. But, the wisdom that you get, you'll get straight from God. And the revelation that you get, you'll get through the Holy Spirit.

He said it was boring. And the man of God said, and that right here is just stepping, getting it back. Did you know what? You can lose your axe head going to Bob Jones University.

Get busy going to class, doing academic work, trying to stay on the dean's honor roll, graduate with honors. That's good. But, when you neglect the Word of God and prayer, there goes your axe head right there.

Now, you need to pay attention to what I'm saying this morning and practice what I'm going to suggest before I'm through with this message. When you lose your axe head, college degrees and studies won't mean a good deal. Now, there ought not to be a conflict in the two, but sometimes I've had preacher boys say, well, I don't plan to do any preaching until I get my education.

I'd preach all along the trail, boys. If you can take it for an old country boy, when God called me to preach, there's one thing I wanted to do worse than anything else, and that's preach. Now, people didn't seem to have any idea that they wanted me to preach, and so I had to go find a place.

I mean, I'd go to jailhouse, street corner, that's back where you can preach anywhere. Well, you can't even preach there, they'll throw you in jail for preaching on the street corner now. We don't have any religious liberty and freedom left in this country.

I've been building homes now for 30 years, and they took me to jail and locked me up for taking care of girls. Let these nasty streakers run all across town, they closed on, and they say, well, it's just a childish

stunt, you know. The Bible calls it sin.

And just imagine a streaker going across Bob Jones' campus. The fact is, there's a rumor out, Dr. Bob, there's a rumor out that a boy, a streaker, ran across your campus, said he pulled off his tie and went all the way across the campus without a foul. Brother, I like that kind of rumor.

That's an honor. Thank God for a school that people laugh at for having some convictions. I'd like to join you.

If I ever go to school again, I'm going to come here. Ah, listen, there's no... Listen, without conviction, you're in the same shape of body as without a bone. He said, I've lost my axe head.

He said, all right, do you want it back? He said, of course I want it back. We're building a church house. He said, where did it fall? That's it.

Come on. You've got to find out where you lost it at. Huh? Where it fell at.

That's what he's talking about. Where it fell at. Well, he said, I don't know.

I guess somewhere over there. Oh, no. Where did it fall? You know, you've got to pinpoint your sin.

Have you ever thought about that? You can't... I heard an old evangelist one day. He's up preaching. A fellow came down and he was going to confess sin.

And he said, well, you're going to have to forsake your sin. He said, I don't know what my sin is. And the preacher said, well, just guess at it.

And he said, what do you know? He guessed it the first time. Yeah. You know what your sin is.

And if you don't ask the Holy Spirit who's patrolling on the inside of the heart, He'll tell you what it is. If you don't know what's wrong with you, pick up the book and read it until He tells you what's wrong with you. You're not as dumb as you think you are about sin.

Where it fell at. And he said right here. And he took him a stick, didn't he? And that could have to be the old rugged cross.

You rightly relate yourself to the cross. You'll get your axe head back. I mean, you get connected with the cross and die out to your selfish self.

You'll get your axe head back. And the iron, what? Did swim. And he picked up.

And the iron stuck and the axe head stuck to the stick. And he picked it up and he went back to work again. You know that's a miracle, don't you? Iron don't swim unless the power of God gets a hold of it.

Ah, listen. It took a miracle mixed with tears and a man of God to make him tell him where he lost it. Just like Nathan came to David and said, David, your honor, somebody had a little lamb.

Brought it up as one of the children. You know the story. And David got indignant and angry and said, Where's the man? And Nathan said, I'm looking straight at him.

Leveled his single barrel shotgun on him and said, I'm talking to the king and about the king. You know where it fell, don't you? You know the day you turned on your television set and looked at Bathsheba, don't you? You remember the day that you sent brave old Uriah up with his death message in his pocket and said, Kill him and get him out of the way. Cover up my sin.

You know where it fell. Students, I hold an unusual thing in my hand here. It's something I never dreamed I'd see.

One of the things I hold is a little girl that didn't make it. When she had to leave our home, she was dead in four days. That's a little lamb.

Here's an article that just came to my desk through the mail. Society told, must deal with sin. George W. Cornell, Associated Press religion writer, he said one of America's greatest psychiatrists, Dr. Carl Menninger, says the old religious word sin has almost disappeared from modern usage.

But it remains a fact of the human condition that must be recognized to deal with it. He says the realities of personal guilt and sin have been glossed over as only symptoms of emotional illness or environmental conditioning for which the individual isn't considered responsible. But he adds, there is sin which cannot be subsumed under verbal artifacts such as disease, delinquency, deviancy.

There is immorality. There is unethical behavior. There is wrongdoing.

He calls for a reaffirmation of the concept of sin and of personal responsibility for it. It's an unusual article, Dr. Jones. Yonder some girls' society called them sick, and they took them to all their doctors, and they were dying in sin.

We got them to the one doctor, the great physician. He healed every one of them. Saved them by His grace.

Brother, we've got to recognize the malady and then head for the Master that can do something about it. Have you lost your axe head this morning? As a student in Bob Jones University, wouldn't you like your axe head firmly put on that old axe handle and chopped down some wood for God in your generation? And let the Lord use you. Now, Dr. Jones, will you come, please? Girls, you may come.

In the fight we're in, I really counted all joy to have gone to the jail, and maybe tomorrow, that's tomorrow's Wednesday, the Supreme Court is going to send me back to jail, and I'm going to have to pay \$5,400 as a fine. I'm under a \$5,000 bond this morning for these girls here and for 1,500 others like them that have come to our home. And then I'm going back home and get on the offensive.

We're probably going to fire some suits on the liars and ask them to pay at least some of the damages and seek to vindicate and exonerate the ministries that have been so sinful. Now, I know there's something going on because they asked me to come and talk with them and said, We must help you get these homes open. But the Welfare Department thinks otherwise.

The governor said and the attorney general said, I apologized in a sense for causing them so much mail, they said, Brother Olaf, the sweetest letters we've ever read. We read from your friends. We never dreamed that you had that many friends.

They said, their lawyers told me the last time I was there, if we'd have known this fight was going to get this big, we'd have never started it. But since they started it, it's up to us to end it. Right.

Dr. Jones, I have great confidence in this student body and in you. I really do. I know of no one man that's encouraged me with his letters, the warmest letters.

One letter came with a check for \$500 in it from this great institution. In one of the darkest hours of my life. And we've got five of our students that have gone through our homes sitting in your congregation.

And personally, I'd like to voice my gratitude that you would take our students and offer to them the things that they're receiving while in this school. And before our girls, and I sing just one little stanza. How many of you are from Texas? Excuse me, would you let me let you stand? Come on.

If you're from Texas, get up. Say, that's a good representation. And I'm glad you chose Bob Jones.

We have some more that will be coming with you in the fall. Now girls, step up and let's close the service. We've run over a minute.

You'll forgive us. And remember. There's something mighty sweet about the Lord.

There's something mighty sweet about the Lord. It really doesn't matter what the people say. There's something mighty sweet.

Singing everywhere. There's something mighty sweet. It really isn't.

And most compassionate soul winners I've ever known. Has won more drunkards and put more of them in colleges. And seen them graduate with honors than probably any man on the face of the earth today.

Brother Johnny, this is a great student body, isn't it? Yes, sir. I wonder if you'd stand with us now, everywhere. I want Brother Johnny to pray for our students.

And close this service. And thank you for letting us come to be with you. Father in heaven, what a thrill.

What a joy. To be in this university today. In this chapel service.

Look out over the audience and see all these young people studying. To be soldiers of the cross. To go out and preach the gospel.

To win people to Christ. And Father, I pray that you'd help them to realize. That the greatest thing that they'll learn here at this school.

Is what the Holy Spirit will give them. And that's His love for others. And I pray, Lord, that you'd help them to go out with the Word of God burning in their soul.

With a real love for sinners. With kindness and tenderness and patience. Lord, it takes it to win them to Christ.

As the drunkards come to the City of Refuge. They find somebody that loves them. Which they've been criticized and condemned.

And the greatest thing that happens at the City of Refuge. To reach them to Christ. Is for them to know.

That through the workers there. Christ has put a love in our heart for them. It's not a fleshly love.

It's a God's love. And so Father, we pray. That you'd bless these students and faculty.

That they'd produce great men and women. To shock this nation for the glory of God. And turn it back to Jesus.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. This program is sponsored by Bob Jones University.

Please join us again for the chapel platform.

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